

**METHOD AND APPARAUTS FOR *IN SITU* PROTECTION OF SENSITIVE
OPTICAL MATERIALS**

ABSTRACT

A method and apparatus are provided for in situ protection of sensitive optical materials from alteration or damage due to exposure to trace atmospheric components, during shipping, storage or operation. The sensitive optical material is disposed within an enclosure adaptable to be substantially sealed against the external atmosphere. A container, enclosing a sink material absorbing trace atmospheric components, is coupled to the enclosure by a gas permeable surface, which allows fast diffusion of the trace atmospheric components present inside the enclosure to the sink material.